

APPENDIX 3.x.x.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE APPLICATION OF COMPARTMENTALISATION

Article 3.x.x.1

Introduction and objectives

The guidelines in this Appendix provide a structured framework for the application and recognition of *compartments* within countries or *zones*, based on the provisions of Chapter 1.3.5. with the objective to facilitate trade in animals and products of animal origin and as a tool for disease management.

Establishing and maintaining a disease-free status for an entire country may be difficult, especially in the case of *diseases* that can easily cross international boundaries. For many *diseases*, OIE Member Countries have traditionally applied the concept of zoning to establish and maintain an animal *subpopulation* with a different animal health status within national boundaries.

Chapter 1.1.1. defines a *compartment* as “one or more *establishments* under a common biosecurity management system containing an animal *subpopulation* with a distinct health status with respect to a specific *disease* or specific *diseases* for which required surveillance, control and biosecurity measures have been applied for the purpose of *international trade*.”

The essential difference between zoning and compartmentalisation is that the recognition of *zones* is based on geographical boundaries whereas the recognition of *compartments* is based on management practices and biosecurity. However, spatial considerations and good management practices play a role in the application of both concepts.

Compartmentalisation is not a new concept for *Veterinary Services*; in fact, it has been applied for a long time in many disease control programmes that are based on the concept of disease-free herds/flocks.

The fundamental requirement for compartmentalisation is the implementation of management and biosecurity measures to create a functional separation of *establishments* and allow a clear epidemiological differentiation to be made between *subpopulations* of differing health status.

For example, a confinement operation for poultry or swine in an infected country or *zone* might have biosecurity measures and management practices that result in negligible risk from *diseases* or agents. The concept of a *compartment* extends the application of a ‘risk boundary’

beyond that of a geographical interface and considers all epidemiological factors that can help to create an effective separation between *subpopulations*.

In disease-free countries or zones, *compartments* preferably should be defined prior to the occurrence of a *disease outbreak*. In the event of an *outbreak* or in endemic countries or zones, compartmentalisation may be used to facilitate trade.

For the purpose of *international trade*, *compartments* must be under the direct control and responsibility of the *Veterinary Administration* in the country. For the purposes of this Appendix compliance by the Member Countries with Chapters 1.1.2. and 1.3.3. are an essential prerequisite.

Article 3.x.x.2

Principles for defining a compartment

A *compartment* may be established with respect of a specific *disease* or *diseases*. A *compartment* must be clearly defined, indicating the location of all its components including *establishments*, as well as related functional units (such as feed mills, *slaughterhouses*, rendering plants etc.), their interrelationships and their contribution to an epidemiological separation between the animals in a *compartment* and *subpopulations* with a different health status. The definition of *compartment* may revolve around *disease* specific epidemiological factors, animal production systems, biosecurity practices and similar functional demarcations.

Article 3.x.x.3

Separation of a compartment from potential sources of infection

The management of a *compartment* must provide to the *Veterinary Administration* documented evidence on the following:

a) Physical or spatial factors that affect the status of biosecurity in a compartment

While a *compartment* is primarily based on biosecurity measures, a review of geographical factors is needed to ensure that the functional boundary provides adequate separation of a *compartment* from adjacent animal populations with a different health status. The following factors should be taken into consideration in conjunction with biosecurity measures and, in some instances, may alter the degree of confidence achieved by general biosecurity and surveillance measures:

- i) *disease* status in adjacent areas and in areas epidemiologically linked to the *compartment*;
- ii) location, *disease* status and biosecurity of the nearest *epidemiological units* or other epidemiologically relevant premises. Consideration should be given to the distance and physical separation from:

- flocks or herds with a different health status in close proximity to the *compartment*,
- *slaughterhouses*, rendering plants or feed mills,
- markets, fairs, agricultural shows, sporting events, zoos, circuses and other points of animal concentration.

b) Infrastructural factors

Structural aspects of the *establishments* within a *compartment* contribute to the effectiveness of its biosecurity. Consideration should be given to:

- i) fencing or other effective means of physical separation;
- ii) facilities for people entry including access control, changing area and showers;
- iii) *vehicle* access including washing and *disinfection* procedures;
- iv) *unloading* and *loading* facilities;
- v) isolation facilities for introduced animals.
- vi) infrastructure to store feed and veterinary products;
- vii) disposal of carcasses, manure and waste;
- viii) water supply.

More detailed recommendations for certain *establishments* can be found in Sections 3.2., 3.3. and 3.4. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

c) Biosecurity plan

The integrity of the *compartment* relies on effective biosecurity. The management of the *compartment* should develop, implement and monitor a comprehensive biosecurity plan.

The biosecurity plan should describe in detail:

- i) potential pathways for introduction and spread into the *compartment* of the agents for which the *compartment* was defined, including animal movements, rodents, fauna, aerosols, arthropods, *vehicles*, people, biological products, equipment, fomites, feed, waterways, drainage or other means. Consideration should also be given to the survivability of the agent in the environment;
- ii) the critical control points for each pathway;

- iii) measures to mitigate exposure for each critical control point;
- iv) standard operating procedures including:
 - implementation, maintenance, monitoring of the measures,
 - application of corrective actions,
 - verification of the process,
 - record keeping;
- v) contingency plan in the event of a change in the level of exposure;
- vi) reporting procedures to the *Veterinary Administration*;
- vii) the programme for educating and training workers to ensure that all persons involved are knowledgeable and informed on biosecurity principles and practices.

In any case, sufficient evidence should be submitted to assess the efficacy of the biosecurity plan in accordance with the level of risk for each identified pathway. The biosecurity risk of all operations of the *compartment* should be regularly re-assessed. Based on the outcome, concrete and documented mitigation steps should be taken to reduce the likelihood of introduction of the disease agent into the *compartment*.

d) Traceability system

A prerequisite for assessing the integrity of a *compartment* is the existence of a valid traceability system. All animals within a *compartment* should be individually identified and registered in such a way that their history can be audited. In cases where individual identification may not be feasible, such as broilers and day-old chicks, the *Veterinary Administration* should provide sufficient assurance of traceability.

All animal movements into and out of the compartment should be certified by the *Veterinary Administration* and recorded at the *compartment* level.

Article 3.x.x.4

Documentation of factors critical to the definition of a compartment

Documentation must provide clear evidence that the biosecurity, surveillance, traceability and management practices defined for a *compartment* are effectively applied. In addition to animal movement information, the necessary documentation should include herd or flock production records, feed sources, laboratory tests, birth and death records, the visitor logbook, morbidity history, medication and vaccination records, biosecurity plans, training documentation and any other criteria necessary for the evaluation of disease exclusion.

The historical status of a *compartment* for the *disease(s)* for which it was defined should be documented and demonstrate compliance with the requirements for freedom in the relevant *Terrestrial Code* chapter.

In addition, a *compartment* seeking recognition should submit to the *Veterinary Administration* a baseline animal health report indicating the presence or absence of OIE *listed diseases*. This report should be regularly updated to reflect the current animal health situation of the *compartment*.

Vaccination records including the type of vaccine and frequency of administration must be available to enable interpretation of surveillance data.

The time period for which all records should be kept may vary according to the species and *disease(s)* for which the *compartment* was defined.

All information must be recorded in a transparent manner and be easily accessible so as to be auditable by the *Veterinary Administration*.

Article 3.x.x.5

Surveillance for the agent or disease

The surveillance system should comply with Appendix 3.8.1. on General Guidelines for Surveillance and the specific guidelines for surveillance for the *disease(s)* for which the *compartment* was defined, if available.

a) Internal surveillance

Surveillance should involve the collection and analysis of *disease/infection* data such that the *Veterinary Administration* can certify that the animals in all the *establishments* comply with the defined status of that *compartment*. A surveillance system that is able to ensure early detection in the event that the agent enters an *establishment* is essential. Depending on the *disease(s)* for which the *compartment* was defined, different surveillance strategies may be applied to achieve the desired confidence in disease freedom.

b) External surveillance

The biosecurity measures applied in a *compartment* must be appropriate to the level of exposure of the *compartment*. External surveillance will help identify a significant change in the level of exposure for the identified pathways for *disease* introduction into the *compartment*.

An appropriate combination of active and passive surveillance is necessary to achieve the goals described above. Based on the recommendations of Appendix 3.8.1., targeted surveillance based on an assessment of risk factors may be the most efficient surveillance approach. Targeted surveillance should in particular include epidemiological units in close proximity to the *compartment* or those that have a potential epidemiological link with it.

Diagnostic capabilities and procedures

Officially-designated laboratory facilities complying with the OIE standards for quality assurance, as defined in Chapter I.1.2. of the *Terrestrial Manual*, should be available for sample testing. All laboratory tests and procedures should comply with the recommendations of the *Terrestrial Manual* for the specific *disease*. Each laboratory that conducts testing should have systematic procedures in place for rapid reporting of disease results to the *Veterinary Administration*. Where appropriate, results should be confirmed by an OIE Reference Laboratory.

Emergency response and notification

Early detection, diagnosis and notification of *disease* are critical to minimise the consequences of *outbreaks*.

In case of a suspicion or occurrence of any OIE *listed disease* not present according to the baseline animal health report of the *compartment* referred to in Article 3.x.x.4., the management of the *compartment* should notify the *Veterinary Administration*, as this may indicate a breach in the biosecurity measures. The *Veterinary Administration* should immediately suspend export certification and should notify the *importing countries*. Trade may only be resumed after the *compartment* has adopted the necessary measures to re-establish the biosecurity level and the *Veterinary Administration* re-approves the *compartment* for trade.

Positive findings of the *disease(s)* for which the *compartment* has been defined, should be immediately notified following the provisions of Chapter 1.1.2.

Supervision and control of a compartment

The authority, organisation, and infrastructure of the *Veterinary Services*, including laboratories, must be clearly documented in accordance with the chapter on the evaluation of Veterinary Services of the *Terrestrial Code*, to provide confidence in the integrity of the *compartment*.

The *Veterinary Administration* has the final authority in granting, suspending and revoking the status of a *compartment*. The *Veterinary Administration* should continuously supervise compliance with all the requirements critical to the maintenance of the *compartment* status described in this Appendix and ensure that all the information is readily accessible to the *importing countries*.